



# 4-H GROWS HERE

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## 4-H Club Reporter Packet

Reporter Duties & Resources

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4-H 

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

# 4-H Club

# REPORTER

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## Overview

The reporter and all 4-H officers are representatives. You not only represent your club but the whole 4-H program. Your skills, abilities, standards, ideas, grooming, speech and even smiles represent 4-H'ers everywhere. Representing others is one of your most important responsibilities – not just while you are at 4-H meetings. As 4-H reporter you are responsible for telling your community about your club and its activities, using a variety of media such as newspaper, social media and the county 4-H newsletter.

## Duties

Duties of the reporter include:

- Exhibit good leadership qualities and serve as a role model to the members of the club.
- Utilize basic parliamentary procedure as a tool to conduct effective, orderly meetings. Refer to Parliamentary Procedure Made Easier as a procedure guide. There are basic tips included in this tip sheet as well.
- Work collaboratively with the club volunteer and officer team to develop a yearly club plan (date, time, location and agendas) for club meetings.
- Submit interesting reports and pictures of club activities, members and volunteers to local media outlets (newspaper, radio, television).
- Report club news to the UI Extension county office for the county 4-H newsletter, website and/or Facebook page.
- Work with the club secretary to make sure you have a current club roster that includes the names of all club volunteers, officers and members to ensure you have correct information (and correct spelling of everyone's names).
- Arrive early to assist with setup for meetings.
- Support and assist the officer team.



# WRITING NEWS STORIES

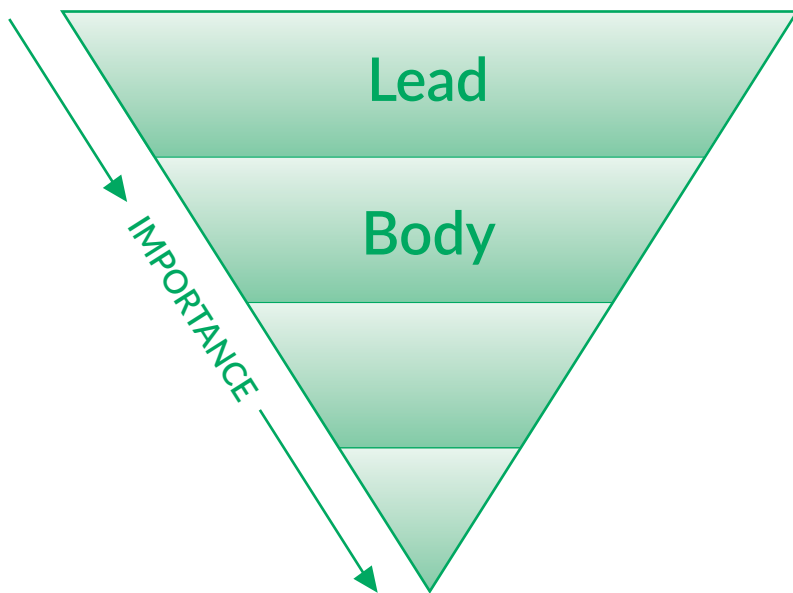
## Tips for Club Reporters

- News must be timely, immediate or near the present, and relative (physically or psychologically) to the audience. Be punctual with your stories. Get your report submitted to the media as soon after the meeting, activity or event as soon as possible.
- Editors prefer local or personal news. Check with newspaper, radio or television stations for requirements they may have for submissions.
- Structure your story using the 5 w's and the h. Include details/plans your club has for future meetings, activities or events.
  - » Who: Who said it? Who is it about? Use full names.
  - » What: What happened? Importance counts.
  - » Where: Where did it happen or where is it going to happen?
  - » When: When did it happen or when will it happen?
  - » Why: Why is it important?
  - » How: How did it happen? Was it unusual?
- Be clear—make your story readable. Here are some tips to improve readability:
  - » Short sentences. News stories average 15 and 20 words per sentence. Sentences longer than 30 words may be hard to understand.
  - » Short paragraphs. Keep paragraphs short and varied in length from one to five average sentences. Remember a 100-word paragraph looks long in a narrow newspaper column.
- » Easy words. Use short, simple words in place of longer, multi-syllable words with the same meaning. When you have to use technical or difficult words, explain it as simply as possible.
- » Personal words. Pronouns like 'you' and 'we,' a person's name or a direct quote make your story more interesting. This personalization is more often used in "feature" news stories, and is a good technique for holding reader interest.
- » Active verbs. Keep stories moving and "grab" the reader more than "to be" verbs that show little action. Action verbs include: tackle, gallop, scramble, etc.
- Get to the point... FAST! Most people whiz through newspapers, reading headlines and maybe only the first paragraph or two. Put important facts in the first paragraph; first sentence is even better. Make sure your story essentials are not at the bottom of your story, because it may not make it into print. Editors chop from the end of the article to make them fit in available space.
- Be neat. Type your report in a font that is easy to read.
- Be accurate. Spell names correctly, be sure to have correct names of each person involved. Also make sure dates are correct.
- Be objective. Leave out personal opinions when writing a report. Report only the facts and remain completely impartial.



## News Story Structure

The basic writing structure used by newspapers is the upside-down pyramid. Unlike books, where each chapter builds to an exciting conclusion on the last page, the conclusion of a news story is in the first one or two paragraphs.



Start with the information needed most—enough information to give a good overview of the entire story.

Body is support—information that is second in importance.

Continue with additional information to complete the story.

The first one or two paragraphs, known as the lead, sum up all the important elements of the story. Each paragraph that follows contains details that are less important. Why is this structure used? It makes editing easier. Editors correct any errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling; then they write a headline to go along with the story and size it to fit the available space on the page. To fit the story on the page, the editor may lop off whole paragraphs at the end without destroying the essential part of the story.

Take a look at the front page of a newspaper. Read one of the stories all the way through. Cover the last paragraph with your hand, then the one above it and the one above that. If the story follows the upside-down pyramid style, it will still be clear and understandable when you've covered most of it with your hand.

# News Story Structure, cont.

## The Lead

The most important part of a story is the lead - the opening paragraph or two. Spend some time working on your leads because they should summarize your story. The lead should be one or two simple sentences summarizing the most important information. It should answer some—if not all—of the following questions:

- Who is the story about?
- What are they doing?
- Where did the story happen?
- When did it take place?
- Why did it happen?
- How did it happen?

The lead should capture the attention of the reader, so work to make it as interesting as possible. Since you are writing a newspaper article, it must be entirely factual. You can't make up any information, but you can try to make what information you have sound interesting. How long should it be? Not long at all. About 50 words is a good rule of thumb.

## The Body

The rest of the story is called the body. It explains the lead and provides more details. In the up-side-down pyramid structure, details are added in order of importance. The more important details go near the top of the story. Less important ones follow.

## Writing the Story

When you write your story:

1. Write complete sentences.
2. Write short paragraphs, no longer than 50 to 60 words.
3. Use full names the first time you mention people. If they have a title or hold a position in the club, that title should follow the person's full name the first time you use it. "John Jones, president of Sunnyside 4-H Club..." The second time you refer to the club member, use just his or her first name, unless someone else in the story has the same first name. In that case, repeat the full name.
4. Be absolutely certain of your facts. Check and double-check.
5. Proofread your story after you are finished. Correct any errors. Don't assume your spelling of names is correct just because the name is simple or common. A "Smith" may be spelled "Smythe."

# News Story Structure, cont.

## Photos

A good news photo is something more than a simple snapshot. A snapshot is an informal picture usually taken in a hurry. A family group picture taken during a holiday is an example. Good news photos are usually informal as well. However, they usually record events while they are happening, people in action, rather than pictures of people who have gathered to have their picture taken. Here are some tips to help you take better news pictures.

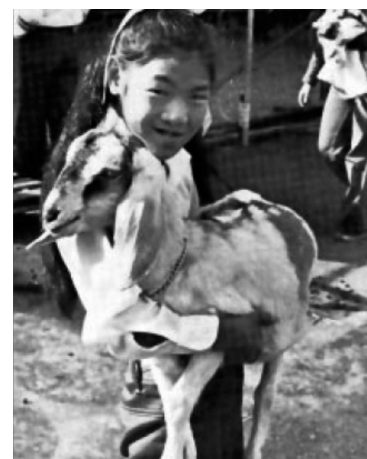
1. Strive for action. Action may be implied rather than actual. A picture of a club member grooming a horse is more interesting than a picture of the same club member standing beside the horse.
2. Go for a natural look. Subjects should concentrate on what they are doing rather than looking at you and your camera.
3. Move up close. You usually don't need to show a person's entire body. The face and hands are the most important things. Have members hold small animals near their faces so you can get a close-up of both. The same goes for a cake that has just come out of the oven.
4. Avoid distracting objects in the background. Telephone poles, for example, will look like sticks growing out of people's heads if you're not careful.
5. If you use a flash, don't pose your subjects in front of a window or a mirror. The flash will be reflected in the glass, causing a distracting "hot spot" in the picture.
6. Don't expect too much from your flash. Know its limits. It may not provide adequate lighting much beyond 7 to 10 feet.
7. Make sure your flash is synched to the correct shutter speed before using it. When you remove it from your camera, take the shutter off its synch position.
8. Avoid pictures of large groups. Two or three people in a news picture is an acceptable group.
9. Each picture should have a caption or cutline. A caption is a brief description of what is happening in the picture. Check with your club volunteers to make sure EVERYONE in the photograph has given media consent before submitting any news report.
10. Submit photographs to media outlets in the required format (usually .jpg files) along with your report. At the bottom of the report, indicate the filename of the photograph(s) you are submitting.

## What is Media Consent?

Media consent is obtained from volunteers and members at the time of enrollment. Before volunteer or members' names or pictures can be used in a report, consent must be obtained first. For various reasons people may not choose to have their name or picture used. We have to make sure we respect their wishes.



This photo brings all the essential story-telling elements together: the girl, her horse, and the ribbon they just won.



This photo would be better if the background were less distracting. This might have been done by waiting for people to walk out of the picture, finding another place, or using a wider f-stop to blur the background.



Group shots are sometimes unavoidable. Get the group close together and get everyone looking at the camera at once. Take several shots, because someone will undoubtedly blink when you snap the shutter.

# Social Media Content Standards

All content must be appropriate for fans. Irrelevant or poorly selected content can result in fans removing themselves or unsubscribing from the page (meaning removing 4-H from their newsfeed and preventing us from interacting with them in the future). Therefore, we carefully choose and re-write content for 4-H social communities based on these criteria:

## Appropriate

- Appeals to a majority of our fans/followers
- Call to action
- Community service based
- Success stories of relatable 4-H programs
- National program updates

## Appropriate

- Spam
- Content relevant only to a few
- Content not relevant to 4-H'ers

If you choose to publish your news report through social media here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Always have your club volunteer review the news report before it is published on any website. Once a report is posted it will always be a part of the cyber-world, even if you delete the report after you have posted it.
- Do not post a report using your personal profile. Submit the report to your UI Extension county office to have them post it on your behalf. Or have your club volunteer create a page for your club (or profile) depending on the type of social media being used.
- DO NOT TAG ANYONE IN YOUR REPORTS.
- ALWAYS have permission before posting any pictures. Club volunteers should view the picture(s) first and know what you are going to do with it BEFORE you do anything.



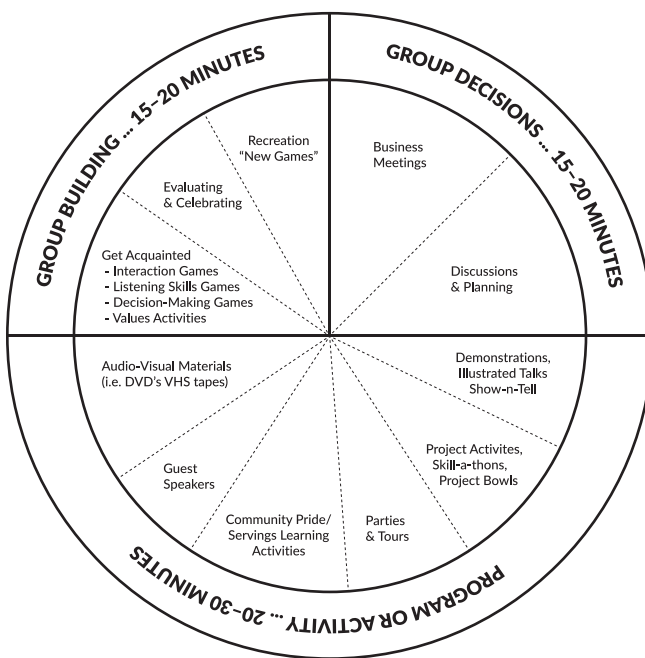
Meetings should be used to carry out the purpose of the organization. You should understand this, as well as the functions and policies of the organization, and help conduct meetings accordingly.

### Preparation

Meetings just don't happen. It takes work and preparation before the meeting to ensure your meetings are effective. 4-H club officers and advisors should meet at the beginning of the year and before each club meeting to plan club activities and events and set the business agenda, the program and the recreational activities.

### Meeting Planning Diagram

This diagram illustrates the amount of time needed during meetings for group building, business and for program. (See page 12 for a larger version.)



### Sample 4-H Club Meeting Agenda

1. Call to order
2. U.S. Pledge of Allegiance
3. 4-H Pledge
4. Introductions & roll call
5. Reading of Minutes of last meeting
6. Treasurer report
7. Other officers' reports (if needed)
8. Committee reports (if needed)
9. Old business
10. New business & announcements
11. Program
  - Educational component
  - Oral presentations by members
  - Guest speaker
  - Service learning
12. Recreation
13. Refreshments
14. Reminders—Next meeting, action items (if needed)
15. Adjourn





## The Order Of Business For 4-H Meetings

### Call to Order

President: "Will the meeting please come to order. (Raps gavel on desk.) Will everyone please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and the 4-H Pledge? Will \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ lead us in these pledges?" (Two different members each month or can be appointed by citizenship committee.)

### Pledge of Allegiance

#### 4-H Pledge

President: "Everyone, please be seated. Will the secretary call the roll?" (Only clubs with fewer than 25 members should call the roll. Larger clubs should pass a sign-in sheet around or have it at the door for people to sign as they come in.)

**Secretary calls the roll.** "Will the secretary read the minutes of the last meeting?"

### Secretary reads minutes.

President: "Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes? (short pause) If not, the minutes stand approved as read. Will the treasurer please give a report?"

### Treasurer gives report.

"Is the reporter ready with a report?" (Must report on a 4-H activity and/or new article(s) since last meeting. Not same as secretary's minutes.)

### Reporter reports.

President: "Will the health chairman (example committee) give the report?"

**Health chairman reports.** Repeat for other committees if needed.

President: "Is there any old business?"

President: "Is there any new business? Are there any announcements? I will now turn the meeting over to the vice president for the program."

**Program:** Vice president presiding.

"\_\_\_\_ will give a project talk." Or "\_\_\_\_ will present a demonstration today on \_\_\_\_."

Or "\_\_\_\_ will present a special program titled \_\_\_\_."

### Members present program.

"This concludes our program. I will now turn the meeting back over to the president."

President: "Welcome (Name of guest). I now turn the meeting over to \_\_\_\_" the club leader, a resource volunteer or guest to present a program (or make announcements)."

President: "Does our leader have any additional announcements? Do I hear a motion to adjourn the meeting? Is there a second to the motion? The meeting is now adjourned."

## 4-H Emblem, Motto, Slogan, and Pledge

### Emblem

The 4-H emblem is a green, four-leaf clover with a white "H" on each leaf which represent one of the four H's: Head, Heart, Hands and Health. The white stands for purity. Green, nature's most common color, represent life, springtime and youth.



**4-H Motto:** "To Make the Best Better"

**4-H Slogan:** "Learn by Doing"

### 4-H Pledge

I pledge my head to clearer thinking,  
my heart to greater loyalty,  
my hands to larger service, and  
my health to better living,  
for my club, my community, my country,  
and my world.



# RESOURCES

## General Rules of Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary Procedure Made Easier (see references section) has detailed information regarding motions and the details of how parliamentary procedure works. Below is a very simplified guide to using parliamentary procedure.

1. Always rise to make a motion or to address a group
2. When making a motion, one should say, "I move that..." NOT "I make a motion."
3. A motion must be approved by a second person saying "I second that motion."
4. The floor refers to the area in which business is being conducted (the meeting room). The president, presiding officer, always has control of the floor except when granted to another member.
5. Use of the gavel:
  - i. One tap: members are to be seated and signifies the pass/fail of a motion.
  - ii. Two taps: calls meeting to order.
  - iii. Three taps: members are to rise.
6. Voting methods include: voice, rising, show of hands, secret ballot and roll call.
7. President only votes in the case of a tie.
8. When used properly, parliamentary procedure will provide for a very orderly and efficiently run business meeting which allows the right of everyone to be heard.

### Types of Motions

1. Main Motions: to present an opinion or propose an action for the group to consider.
2. To Adjourn: to end a business meeting in an orderly fashion.
3. To Call for Question or Privilege: provides for immediate action to be taken for the rights, privileges or comfort of the group.
4. Table: to set aside a main motion until a given time for future consideration.

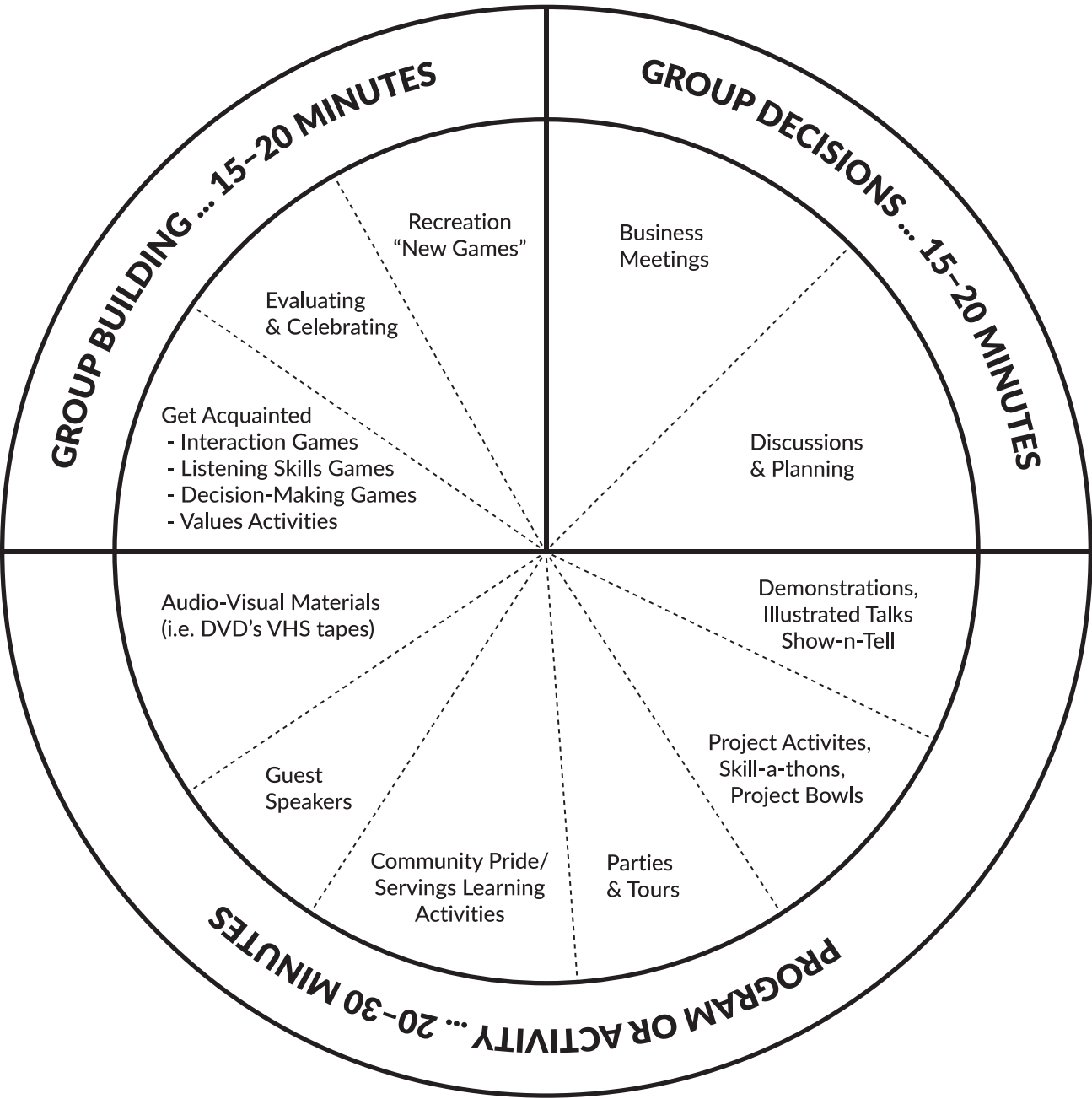
# 4-H Club Annual Plan of Meetings and Activities

<b>Month</b> Date Time Location	<b>Business Agenda</b> Events, Activities, Items for group decision	<b>Program Agenda</b> Educational program or Activity. Speakers, Demonstrations	<b>Recreation Agenda</b> Singing, games, team building, refreshments.	<b>Community Service Project</b>	<b>Special Events</b> Club, County District, State

# Sample 4-H Club Annual Plan

Month Date Time Location	Business Events, Activities, Items for group decision	Program Educational program or activity, Speakers, Demonstrations	Recreation Singing, games, team building, refreshments	Community Service Project	Special Events Club, County, District State
Sept	Elect officers Hand out enrollment forms Appoint • Planning committee • National 4-H Week promotion committee	Parliamentary procedure Make posters for National 4-H Week.	Picnic Get acquainted (name game)  Watermelon seed spitting contest	Announce fire prevention survey in October	Club Family Night Leader's Council Mtg.
Oct	Install Officers Collect enrollments and money for materials. Planning committee gets approval for program for year – hand out yearly plan.	Present completion certificates and seals. Return record books	Halloween Game	Reports on fire safety survey. Plan for Thanksgiving needy box.	National 4-H Week Recognition Night Leader's Council Mtg.
Nov	Plan • fund-raising project for camp • Community Service activities Remind to bring gift for Holiday party in Dec.	Holiday gifts and decorations	Thanksgiving Game	Plan for Christmas box for needy family	State 4-H Ambassador Training KYG applications due State Leader's Forum Leader's Council Mtg.
Dec	Announce Officer's Training	Explain record keeping	Holiday party	Deliver Christmas box. Plan for visit to nursing home in February	
Jan	Announce Communications Rodeo	give instructions on demos. Make valentines for nursing home	Action songs & games		KYG interviews Officer's Training Leader's Council Mtg.
Feb	Finish fund-raising project	Demonstrations by members Work on Involvement Rpt	Valentine Game	Visit nursing home	KYG – president's holiday weekend. District II Leaders Forum Leader's Council Mtg.
Mar	Report on KYG Report on Leaders forum	Demonstrations by members Leaders get in groups w/ youth to explain record keeping.	St Patrick's game		Beef Weigh-in Communications Rodeo Leader's Council Mtg.
Apr	Announce 4-H Camp Report on Communications Rodeo	Speaker: from humane society to talk about spaying and neutering animals Project reports by members Records check	April Fools party	Plant tree on school grounds	Swine Weigh-in Leader's Council Mtg.
May	Announce judging events, fair dates	Project tour	Action songs & games		Lamb weigh-in Leader's Council Mtg.
June	Announce fair cleanup, orientation and potluck	Judging practice Records check	Relays		Teen Conference 4-H Teen Camp Leader's Council Mtg.
July	Report on Camp and Teen Conference	Complete records	Picnic; folk games		1 <sup>st</sup> 4-H Kids Camp Fair entry forms due Record books due Fair Cleanup Leader's Council Mtg.
Aug	Report on Camp Announcements about club reorganization.	Speaker: from Birds of Prey Center	Action songs & games		County Fair 2 <sup>nd</sup> 4-H Kids Camp Western Idaho Fair

# Meeting Planning Diagram



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